

CII\Hersh

Memo to Sy Hersh, 5 October, 1987, Tuesday: starts with transcriptions of my hand-written notes of 1964 on two transcriptions of telephone calls involving Secretary Rusk in 1962, available to me in my study of "Crisis Communications" in 1964. Following are my comments today on these conversations, partly informed by having read, just last night, U Thant's account in his "View From the UN" memoir of the discussions in Havana being described in these calls to Rusk from Stevenson and from Ball.

Stevenson - Sec. ^{ntang} 10/31/62

Sov. ^{int} Ambassador [to Havana] told U Thant:

Order from ^{Rinkov} K to dismantle received before 1 and 3 ⁴ PM. Started dismantling at 5 on Sunday. Will be all over at latest by Friday, when we will have finished bulldozing of sites.... Even the pads will be gone, but no Cuban observation of the dismantling is permitted.

^{delta}
^{underlying} As to aircraft, Russians assured them that Cubans had not been trained to fly them... Any equipment, Sov. ^{et} manned will go. All the A-A, both SAM and conventional, is manned by Cubans. It was a Cuban colonel that shot down our plane.

^{AA [anti-aircraft]} Castro is frustrated, intense, psychotic...

Rihye: ^w please lay off the recon till Friday. After that you will find they have bulldozed all of the sites.

11/1/62 Ball - Sec. ^{ntang}

Castro talked as though he had all the anti-aircraft and he did boast that it was the Cubans who had shot down Major Anderson. Rihye himself is not at all persuaded that this was just only boastfulness on his part.

... He feels that there is a state of very definite kind of hysteria down there at the moment; that they are probably going to be looking for flights today, and that they are going to throw everything that they have. After Castro makes his speech he thinks that if we could delay until tomorrow that the chances of getting into any real trouble are considerably diminished, particularly if we change the flight patterns.

(Mikoyan didn't want to have to invite Zorin, [so] didn't want Adlai... U.N.)

Rihye said on a Security Council meeting that Castro would

ask him to hold the meeting off till after the 6th...

Sec.: Why the 6th!

Ball: Why, our elections.

(Mikoyan didn't want to have to invite Zorin, [so] didn't want Adlai... U.N.)

on telcons

Ellsberg Notes, 5 October 1987, on above telcons

(published in 1978)

U Thant's memoirs, View from the U.N., pp. 185-186, make clear that the first phone call is a report of a meeting held in Havana at 7:45 PM, Tuesday, October 30, 1962. (U Thant and his military aide, Brig. Gen. Indarjit Rikhye, had arrived in Havana about 1:15 PM and had had a first meeting with Castro and other officials from 3 to about 7 PM.)

The meeting described here took place in U Thant's quarters before dinner at the request of the Soviet Ambassador to Cuba, who brought along the Soviet General in charge of all Soviet missile forces in Cuba. U Thant does not identify him, but from other sources, but from other sources, this must have been Col. Gen. of Aviation Viktor Davidkov. It was to Davidkov that Mal'tsev, Commander of the Banes base, reported on the morning of October 27 on the attack and counterattack at the Los Angeles SAM site.

The first paragraph in Stevenson's telephone conversation with Rusk, headed "Soviet Ambassador told U Thant", follows closely U Thant's account of what he was told by the Soviet general in the presence of the "very young" Soviet ambassador to Cuba. So what follows is presumably likewise information from the general. It involves three crucial points that are not included in U Thant's account of this meeting in his memoir:

- (1) that the Cubans had not been trained to fly the IL-28's
- (2) that any equipment Soviet-manned would go: but that "all the A-A, both SAM and conventional, is manned by Cubans."
- (3) it was a Cuban colonel who shot down the U-2

Point 3 is reported in U Thant's memoir as coming directly from Castro to U Thant in the meeting the following day, October 31: "He explained the U-2 had been brought down by Cuban anti-aircraft guns, manned only by Cubans, and that the airman

fell with the plane and died instantly." (p. 188)

This second meeting is clearly the basis of the second phone call from Ball to Sec. Rusk on November 1, 1962; presumably Rikhye, who was quoted, debriefed Ball after his return with U Thant to New York and the U.N. in the afternoon of October 31.

There are two extraordinary assertions in these two conversations, quite aside from the assertion by both Castro and the Soviet general in charge of missile forces, speaking only four days after the event directly to U Thant, that it was Cubans rather than Russians who shot down the U-2. First, there is Davidkov's statement that Cubans were manning the SAM's as of October 30, three days after the first and only SAM firing. If this was true, it seems hardly likely that it was a change from the situation on October 27; it would not make sense for Soviets to turn over control of the SAM's to Cubans after a U-2 had been shot down and the Cubans had declared their intention to continue to defend their airspace with all available means, since this contradicted the inspection provisions that Khrushchev had offered without consulting Castro. In other words, this seems to imply very strongly that Cubans were capable of operating the SAM's and were manning them on October 27, and perhaps earlier, even if Russian officers were nominally in command.

It follows from this that Cuban personnel might have been in a position to fire a SAM at the U-2 on October 27, and that fighting at the Los Angeles site could have involved Russian efforts to prevent them from firing the SAM's rather than Cuban efforts to wrest control from the Russians. Castro would have a motive for denying this in public, as he has done to Tad Szulc, because Khrushchev had publically assured Kennedy that the SAM's, as well as the surface-to-surface missiles, were fully under the control of Soviets. If this was a lie, the Soviets may have induced Castro to protect their lie ever since.

The second assertion, however, is that the shootdown was by Cuban antiaircraft artillery. This could be a simple confusion of terms by Castro and Khrushchev, who says the same thing, a failure to distinguish between the rocketry of the SAM's and the antiaircraft artillery. But since they usually do make this distinction, it raises a question whether there might not be at least some confusion on the Cuban and Soviet side as to which type of weapon actually made the kill. It could even, astoundingly, be quite clear to them that it was in fact artillery that destroyed the U-2!

This could have arisen if a SAM, with a typical near-miss or distant miss, had somewhat damaged the U-2 and forced it to lower altitudes (something like this could have happened to Gary Powers in 1960: I don't believe we know for sure just what caused his plane finally to come apart). Antiaircraft artillery could then have destroyed the plane. Or artillerymen firing at the plane might believe that they were responsible for the

destruction of the plane; there might well be no way to have determined this with certainty at the time, either by Cubans, Soviets, or Americans (or Major Anderson, while he lived).

Looking at available accounts, one finds that SAC was for a prolonged period uncertain how the plane had been forced down, and even whether it had been attacked. According to Detzer, The Brink, p. 248, "SAC knew its U-2 plane was down, but at first was not sure why. They speculated that the plane might have malfunctioned, leading to 'pilot hyposxia' (oxygen deficiency). They did not, however, really think it was a malfunction. Anderson, they knew, had gone down near Banes, right next to a SAM site."

I am not aware on what basis SAC later based its assertion that the U-2 had been destroyed by a SAM. Perhaps they were able later to decipher telemetry that assured them that a SAM had been fired; but it would seem very unlikely that this would prove that the SAM had actually accomplished the destruction, as opposed to causing damage that forces the plane down to a level where antiaircraft artillery could hit it. Moreover, I doubt that telemetry would reveal destruction by artillery, assuming an absence of signals from the plane itself, which seems to be implied by SAC's initial uncertainty.

Anderson was hit about 10:15 Saturday morning, October 27, but that afternoon President Kennedy was still asking "for absolute verification that the U-2 was shot down and did not crash accidentally" (RFK, Thirteen Days, p. 76). And on the afternoon of October 29, Stevenson asked U Thant to use his good offices "to get the release, if he were still alive, of a Major Rudolph Anderson." (U Thant, p. 180. It was this inquiry that led Castro to tell U Thant that Cuban artillerymen had downed Major Anderson and that he had been killed.) In other words, two days later, there was this much uncertainty as to the fate of Anderson.

Could it be that the SAC conclusion that Anderson had been hit only by, or mainly damaged by, a SAM is based on nothing more than the fact that he went down near a SAM site--and perhaps that a SAM is known to have been fired then? Maybe artillerymen had reason to believe that it was their firing, in the end, that destroyed the plane--and maybe they were even right!

Who, then, ordered the firing of the SAM, assuming one was fired?

The fact is that no Soviet official has ever, to my knowledge, said even one of the following assertions, which were assumed to be true by virtually all members of the ExCom, without question, and which have scarcely been questioned by any analysts since (almost the only exceptions, mentioning other possibilities, though not Cuban control, are Detzer and Dinerstein):

...the ... of ... and ...

...the ... of ... and ...

...the ... of ... and ...

...the ... of ... and ...

...the ... of ... and ...

...the ... of ... and ...

...the ... of ... and ...

1. The U-2 was shot down by a SAM.
2. The U-2 was shot down by Russians.
3. The U-2 was shot down on Khrushchev's orders.

I repeat: so far as I am aware, no Soviet official has ever asserted any of these propositions; on a number of occasions when Americans have made one or more of these statements to a Soviet official, no direct answer bearing on the claim is recorded.

Both Khrushchev and Davidkov, on the contrary, have made assertions contradicting 2 and 3; Castro has contradicted 1, 2 and 3, as has Khrushchev. These assertions, reported by U Thant, and Khrushchev in his memoirs, have simply been ignored in the literature; they don't even lead to speculation, questions raised, let alone refutation.

This is partly because it is taken for granted that Russians were in control of the SAMS--on the basis of Khrushchev's assertion publicly, and general assumption--although it is obvious that the Cubans were manning the systems within a week or so of the shootdown. Why not earlier? Moreover, Russians always obey orders, orders like this always come from the top, their puppet allies always do exactly what they're told, etc.: unlike US experience, or anyone else's in human history...

1. The first was shot down at 12 AM

2. The second was shot down at 12:15 AM

3. The third was shot down at 12:30 AM

4. The fourth was shot down at 12:45 AM

5. The fifth was shot down at 1:00 AM

6. The sixth was shot down at 1:15 AM

Fast version of RFK to me, 1964: The content of what is in Thirteen Days (I don't recall this giving me any information on this episode when I read it in 1968) but with two additions:

I asked him if he had mentioned a deadline: he said yes, 48 hours. (This is somewhat at odds with his statement in the memoir that Soviets had to decide "by tomorrow." However, other sources, since, seem to say 48 hours. Anyway, that's what he said to me.

If they fired on one more recon plane, "Then the whole operation would commence right then; we would hit all the SAMs and probably the missiles as well; and probably invasion would follow." I said: "So they had 48 hours to decide, unless they shot one more plane, in which case they could have it right away." "Yes."

U.S. THREAT CITED IN '62 CUBA CRISIS

R.F. Kennedy Lays Soviet Retreat to Warning

Special to the New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 25 - Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy said today that a United States warning of "overwhelming retaliatory action" caused the Soviet Union to "back down in the crisis last fall over Soviet missiles in Cuba.

The Attorney General said "notification" that such action would be forthcoming was sent to Premier Khrushchev Saturday, Oct. 27. It was the next morning that Mr. Khrushchev agreed to withdraw the missiles.

Mr. Kennedy's remarks were made in a speech at Columbia, S.C. this evening.

The shooting down of a U-2 plane over Cuba on the morning of Oct. 27 was a crucial factor, Mr. Kennedy said. The plane was piloted by Maj. Rudolf Anderson Jr. of Greenville, S. C.

The Attorney General said it was Major Anderson's death that "led the President to notify Mr. Khrushchev that strong and overwhelming retaliatory action would be taken unless he received immediate notice that the missiles would be withdrawn."

Ultimatum Is Hinted

The Attorney General's remarks indicated to some observers that a message calling for an immediate response--in effect an ultimatum--had been sent to Mr. Khrushchev on Oct. 27. No such message has previously been disclosed.

President Kennedy did send a letter that evening, but it was not couched in the strong terms his brother suggested today.

The President's letter, which was published at the time, took up a rambling note from Mr. Khrushchev the night before and construed it to offer withdrawal of the missiles in return for lifting of the naval quarantine of Cuba and a no-invasion pledge.

The President's letter deliberately ignored a more stubborn Khrushchev note that was received on the morning of Oct. 27. That note demanded abandonment of United States missile bases in Turkey as the price for withdrawal of the Soviet weapons in Cuba.

High officials who took part in the critical decisions of Oct. 27 said tonight that they knew of no secret message or ultimatum.

They supported the Attorney General's statement that Major Anderson's death was a major element in bringing this country to the edge of drastic actions such as an air strike on Cuban bases. But they said the warning to Mr. Khrushchev--the "notification"--was by way of deeds, not words.

Soon after Washington learned of Major Anderson's death, a decision was made to call up 14,000 Air Force reservists. Military and communications equipment were rushed south to Florida.

Tonight, officials said that it was decided to let these moves be made more or less openly--"to move the people around in a slightly more visible way," as one put it. The idea was to make it clear that a serious United States move was imminent.

"What got the message through to Khrushchev was action," one official said. "The message was clear that something was going to happen and happen soon."

The Attorney General confirmed in his speech a report that it was Major Anderson who took the first pictures of the Soviet missile bases as they were under construction in Cuba.

That U-2 flight was made Oct. 14. Major Anderson was believed to have been slightly off his charted course when his camera picked up the bases in the San Cristobal area.

Cady 8th 4 Oct Sunday
Forget about Boston

Set up ^{scholarly} Conference in Washington

Met on C-Space - live

FBI's Sept 29 Latin American Daily Report
Page 1 Castro.

Rome Paper carries Castro interview

Sept 20 L'Espresso

Miami Mirror - Hawaiian, Cuba

(is from interview: shot Castro 12 hrs before)

This night in Rome Oct 8

20th anniversary Che's death

"I shot down the U-2" (!?)

SH/Arch

I have verified that what I heard of Frank's

(in all its circumstances; he won't say ^{ever} the know more than I did.

SH: "I can't say for sure that I know of this, or responded
to it. I've got a good story; that Frankel would have put it

on page 1; but Frankel won't say yes or no; on the story, he's

[There may got to OK, because SH is not a reporter.

Someone said Delipfeld has given up on him, on the

He disagreed with the disreputable story.

SH can't go on to Wash Post. If he was doing daily

reporting, he would have a good story. But - he isn't

satisfied with this, as in article prior? (like delegation?)

or the Frankel int.? (Why is Frankel silent? "Because

he's an arrogant asshole."

3/18/64

DRAFT MEMO: CRISIS-MANAGEMENT STUDY FOR THE INTERAGENCY PANEL

At the request of the Interagency Panel, Dr. Daniel Ellsberg has agreed to undertake a study of high-level decision-making problems in intense international crises. Dr. Ellsberg has committed himself to this study full-time for approximately six months; he will be assisted on a part-time basis by Brig. Gen. Glenn Kent and by Mr. Seymour Weiss.

The broad purpose of the study is to achieve greater understanding -- as a basis for better anticipation of problems and improved inter-agency response -- of the interaction between political and military factors and of the operational requirements and constraints that may be encountered in future crises.

The study will focus on crisis situations with the potential of erupting into intense military conflict, in particular those in which the threat or use of nuclear weapons is contemplated, but it will be necessary also to examine the lesser crises and conflicts that have actually been experienced and to explore decision-making problems that might arise in the early stages of warfare ensuing from an intense crisis. Among the issues to be considered are problems of communicating, in a broad sense, with allies and with opponents during a crisis, and problems of interagency coordination.

A major input to the study via interviews with Ellsberg, should be the professional insights of the individual Panel members themselves. An important object of the study is to retrieve, compare and analyse this collective experience, and to devise methods for preserving and transmitting such individual experience and perceptions, in future, more broadly and reliably; so that it is not only individual decision-makers, but also their colleagues, staffs and successors who learn from their experience in specific crises.

Ellsberg will also need to see existing studies of past crises, prepared within the separate agencies, which members of the Interagency Panel can make available to him.

RFK NOT ONLY WARNED THAT "IF
OUR RECON IS FIRED ON..." WE FIRE BACK —

"The President ordered the Ex Comm . . ." THIS BEING

RFK

SEPARATE FROM

1-2 DAY ULTIMATUM

(NEXT PAGE):

HE WARNED

SPECIFICALLY,

"IF CUBANS FIRE"

(PRESUMING AA);

AS SOVS KNEW,

IF THEY WOULD,

WHATEVER

SU WANTED!

"GAME"

I telephoned Ambassador Dobrynin about 7:15
P.M. and asked him to come to the Department of Jus-
tice. We met in my office at 7:45. I told him first that we
knew that work was continuing on the missile bases in
Cuba and that in the last few days it had been expedited.
I said that in the last few hours we had learned that our
reconnaissance planes flying over Cuba had been fired
upon and that one of our U-2s had been shot down and
the pilot killed. That for us was a most serious turn-of
events.

President Kennedy did not want a military con-
flict. He had done everything possible to avoid a mili-
tary engagement with Cuba and with the Soviet Union,
but now they had forced our hand. Because of the de-
ception of the Soviet Union, our photographic recon-
naissance planes would have to continue to fly over
Cuba, and if the Cubans or Soviets shot at these planes,
then we would have to shoot back. This would inevi-
tably lead to further incidents and to escalation of the
conflict, the implications of which were very grave in-
deed.

He said the Cubans resented the fact that we
were violating Cuban air space. I replied that if we had
not violated Cuban air space, we would still be believ-
ing what Khrushchev had said—that there would be no

Did he
know this
before
Brady
told him
after 3
(Dobrynin)
250

Scoble
continues
the with
43- from
info.

STILL: CASTRO FIRING INDEPENDENTLY...

(NO) (DID DOBRYNIN
KNOW?)

85

(Did RFK cancel a Del. resolution —
from JCS? Congress, Berlin, Polignac?)

remark: "Now, Mr. Secretary, if you and your Deputy will go back to your offices, the Navy will run the blockade."¹³²

The Withdrawal of Soviet Missiles from Cuba

Chairman Khrushchev's announcement on Sunday, October 28, that "the arms which you describe as offensive [will be] crated and returned to the Soviet Union" marked the climax of the crisis.¹³³ A week of intense interaction between the United States and the Soviet Union preceded that announcement. That interaction was in large part a by-product of action within each nation — action that pitted government leaders against organizations whose outputs they sought to control. Indeed, the similarities between the phrases with which the groups who sat on top of each government characterized "the problem" are suggestive. As Soviet ships approached American warships stationed along the quarantine line, the American leaders sent a letter to the Soviets expressing concern "that we both show prudence and do nothing to allow events to make the situation more difficult to control than it is."¹³⁴ Later a Soviet reply emphasized the danger, "Contact of our ships . . . can spark off the fire of military conflict after which any talks would be superfluous because other forces and other laws would begin to operate — the laws of war."¹³⁵ As the climax of the crisis drew near, developments were, in the American phrase, "approaching a point where events could have become unmanageable."¹³⁶ The Russians chose another metaphor: the logic of war. "If indeed war should break out, then it would not be in our power to stop it, for such is the logic of war."¹³⁷

RFK, CS

Inside the Soviet Union

An understanding of the Soviet withdrawal must begin with an appreciation of the sense in which the missile crisis constituted for the Soviets a "Pearl Harbor in reverse." During the crisis, the leaders of the U.S. government vigorously debated whether the United States could perpetrate a "Pearl Harbor" — whether President Kennedy could be a "Tojo." There, "Pearl Harbor" referred to the Japanese decision to launch a surprise attack. But this symbol has another connotation as well. Especially for readers of Roberta Wohlstetter's artful account of

assumes JFK reference
was inevitable; for
how can it be otherwise?

Pearl Harbor, this word refers to the American failure to read the handwriting on the wall.¹³⁸ It is in this sense that the Cuban missile crisis is essentially the Soviet Union's "Pearl Harbor."

Having initiated a course of action more provocative than Roosevelt's pressure on Japan, the Soviet leaders should have been alert for evidence of American preparations to seize the initiative. The clues available to them seem overwhelming. That the United States had good intelligence on the Soviet build-up was clear. A State Department briefing to reporters on August 24, Presidential statements on September 4, 7, and 13, and Undersecretary of State Ball's testimony on October 3 catalogued the Soviet build-up accurately. On September 4, in response to private assurances from Khrushchev relayed via Dobrynin to Robert Kennedy, the Presidential release itemized precisely the Soviet build-up and warned of American watchfulness for "offensive missiles."¹³⁹ On October 13, in a long conversation, Chester Bowles needled Ambassador Dobrynin on the question of whether the Soviet Union intended to insert "offensive weapons" in Cuba.¹⁴⁰ And on October 18, in reply to the solemn assurances from Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko that the Soviet Union was not installing offensive missiles, the President sent for and read carefully to him the list of public statements that Kennedy had made in September warning the Soviet Union against putting missiles in Cuba.¹⁴¹ Could the Soviet leaders have failed to recognize that the United States was alert to the possibility of Soviet emplacement of offensive missiles in Cuba?

In this setting, the behavior of the U.S. government during the week from October 15 to the American "first strike" on October 22 could have indicated only one thing: U.S. discovery of the Soviet move and preparation for action. At the first meeting of the ExCom (October 16) the President increased the U-2 surveillance of Cuba significantly.¹⁴² Standard observance of U-2 flights would indicate that something was up. The American government attempted to impose secrecy and initiated a program of cover and deception.¹⁴³ The President kept up appearances of normalcy, receiving astronauts and foreign dignitaries and flying to Connecticut and Cleveland to keep commitments. But what John McCone called the "high-priced help" of the government met almost continuously for an entire week.¹⁴⁴ Not until Thursday did someone notice that their official limousines, bearing easily identified license plates, had been assembling